GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:960
ANSWERED ON:02.03.2016
Science Congress
Hari Shri G.;Owaisi Shri Asaduddin

Will the Minister of SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the 103rd Indian Science Congress was held at Mysore recently and if so, the details thereof;

(b) whether the Prime Minister has stressed on the need for scientific audit and desired to chalk out a framework for scientific institutions;

(c) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken or being taken by the Government to promote scientific research in the country;

(d) whether many scientists who attended the recently concluded Science Congress have said that it was a waste of money and if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the reaction of the Government thereto?

Answer

MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EARTH SCIENCES
(SHRI.Y. S. CHOWDARY)

(a) Yes, Madam. The 103rd Annual Session of the Indian Science Congress (ISC) was held recently at the University of Mysore, Mysuru from 3rd to 7th of January, 2016. The Focal Theme of 103rd Indian Science Congress was "Science and Technology for Indigenous Development in India". It was inaugurated by the Hon"ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi, on 3rd of January, 2016. Very large number of delegates attended the Congress including Bharat Ratna Prof. CNR Rao, five Nobel Laureates and one Fields Medalist. Large number of sessions were held on wide-ranging topics − from value of science for society and public; Science, Technology and Innovation Policy; Government"s viewpoints on Science and Technology to nanoscience; discovery and development of novel drugs; big data biotechnology; cancer therapeutics; medical biology and new biology. The Hon"ble Prime Minister also released the Technology Vision 2035 Document brought out by the Technology Information, Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), New Delhi, which is an autonomous body under the Department of Science and Technology (DST). Children Science Congress was also organized where children exhibited their innovative science models. Women"s Science Congress and Science Commuunicators" Meet were other important events that were held along with the Science Congress.

(b) Yes, Madam.

(c) The Government has held Conclaves of the Scientific Departments within the Ministry and evaluated the outcomes and relevance of their scientific programmes. As far as the scientific institutions are concerned, the Government regularly conducts stock-taking and monitoring of the work done by these research and development institutions through their Research Advisory Committees and Governing Bodies/Councils and also, at times, by especially constituted expert committees. These bodies consist of eminent scientists and technologists from across the country and critically evaluate the quality and volume of research and development work done by the institutions by way of research publications in international peer-reviewed journals, patents filed and obtained, technologies developed for commercial and societal applications and/or strategic sector, Ph.Ds produced, other research and technical personnel trained, scientific data of national importance gathered, etc. The conclusion regarding these institutions under the Ministry of Science and Technology is that they are conducting basic research at internationally competitive level, some of them are developing appropriate technologies for meeting crucial national needs and all of them together are helping the Nation in building and sustaining human and institutional capacity for scientific research.

To promote scientific research in the country, the Government of India has established a number of well-equipped institutions for higher education and research across the country. In addition, it also funds research projects submitted by scientists and institutions. State-of-the-art research facilities have thus been established in large number of institutions. The Government also facilitates Indian scientists to carry out research in advanced laboratories elsewhere in the world. A number of fellowship programmes have been instituted with handsome fellowship and contingency amounts to attract bright Indian scientists from abroad as well as to retain them in the country. These include − the INSPIRE Faculty Scheme, Ramalingaswami Fellowships, Ramanujan Fellowships, Women Scientists Awards, Young Scientist Awards, Rapid Grant for Young Investigators Scheme, National Bioscience Award for Career Development, DBT Crest Award, National Women Bio-scientist Awards.

(d) & (e): Yes, Madam. Feeling that the scientific content of the Science Congress was not at the forefront of research, some scientists who attended this Congress, and some who had attended Science Congresses earlier, are reported to have said that Science Congress was waste of money. They, however, have missed the fact that, over the years, Science Congress has become the single

largest grassroots scientific event in the country and is attended by scientists, teachers and students from a wide variety of institutions. The level of scientific discourse, therefore, is also of varied quality, from lectures by Nobel Laureates to popular science lectures and discussions. Being a mammoth grassroots scientific event, widely different scientific ideas are expressed freely during the Congress. From these points of view, the Science Congress serves a unique and valuable purpose. The Government, however, has advised the Indian Science Congress Association (ISCA), Kolkata, which is the mother body organizing the event, to think of ways to improve the scientific and organizational aspects of future Congresses in keeping with its special grassroots character.

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